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"What asses were we, to expect courage from a capon."—BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER.

SUMMARY OF POLITICS.

AMERICAN STATES.——It appears, from the newspapers, that Mr. George Henry Rose, a son of Old George Rose *so long* of the Treasury, is to be sent out to America upon a *special* mission (the son of Lord Erskine of Clackmannan remaining as before), and, that Admiral Berkeley is recalled from the American station.——As to the first, supposing the person to be sent a proper one, and that party interest and self-interest and personal and party revenge have had nothing to do in the choice, we can say but little, except as to the unnecessary expense to the nation, because, as yet, we cannot know what the object of the mission is. From the circumstance of the negociation being put into *new* hands, I should be inclined to augur a proper result, were not this new appointment accompanied with the *recall of Admiral Berkeley*. This may, indeed, have been done from *party* motives, the family of Berkeley with all its interest being opposed to the present ministers in parliament, while Sir John B. Warren and his friends and connexions are on their side; but, whatever we may think of this motive, bad as it may be, the other motive, namely, that of appeasing the Americans, is a thousand times worse. It is most likely, that the ministers and their partizans will alledge no motive at all; but will wrap themselves up in mysterious silence, and plead only their right to do what they have done. But, while we shall be at perfect liberty to ascribe the former motive to them, the vanity and arrogance of the Americans will not fail to insist, that they have been actuated by the latter. This will tend to heighten their tone; they will the more rely upon the exertions of their faction of fundholders here, and, therefore, the means of an amicable adjustment, upon the only terms which we ought to think of, will be greatly enfeebled. What an example is this, too, for the officers of the British navy! What an encouragement to do their duty, in maintaining their country's rights! What admiral, or captain, will, after this, run the risk of being sacrificed to political expediency? If indeed, the ministry were *explicitly* to declare, that they have recalled Admiral Berkeley, because he, in the latter part of his order to his captains, commanded them to permit the American captain to search their ships for American seamen, thus placing the two nations upon a footing of *perfect equality* upon the sea, I should applaud their conduct; but, as the recall now stands, without any such declaration as this, the conclusion of every one will be, that he is recalled, *because he has enforced the right of search*. . . . . I had written so far, when the king's proclamation, (which will be found below) dated on the 16th instant, and published in the Gazette of last Saturday, reached me. That proclamation leaves us no room to doubt, that, with respect to the point at issue, the ministers mean, not to *concede*, but to do what is much worse, to *evade*, and to *sneak* out of the question, without any decision at all. Upon this most curious document, I shall first insert the excellent remarks contained in the TIMES newspaper, of the 19th instant; for, as far as they go, they contain my sentiments.——"His Majesty's Proclamation, which appeared in the Gazette of Saturday last, is, at the present crisis, an extremely important document; inasmuch as it makes us acquainted with some material facts in the existing state of the negociation between this country and America. This is the first moment at which any of the propositions on either side have seen the light: and there certainly is a degree of shamefacedness at their exposure to view, at their first coming into public, that indicates a consciousness on the part of their authors, that they are not quite so manly and energetic, as we had reason to suppose. The right of searching *national* ships for British seamen, is receded from; that of seizing them in, and taking them from, *merchantmen*, is retained; but we believe most people will find it necessary to read the third clause of the proclamation, in which these principles are contained, at least three times, before they will clearly understand them—such ambiguity is there in the expression, such timidity, and

" want of what is called in colloquial idiom,
" ' speaking out.' But further, we learn
" from the clause just cited, that though
" British seamen may not be pursued into
" foreign vessels, bearing a national flag,
" they may still be taken, if it be possible,
" " *in transitu*," they may " be stopped,
" and *made to stay*," as the proclamation
" elegantly expresses, " when endeavour-
" ing to transport and enter themselves into
" the service of any foreign state." Now
" let us apply this permission of detaining
" them to an actual occurrence:—Lord J.
" Townshend states, in his letter to Ad-
" miral Berkeley, that the deserters from
" the Halifax " were seen by him and
" several of his officers parading the streets
" of Norfolk, under the American flag."
" These men, therefore, had not yet enter-
" ed the Chesapeake; could they, by the
" tenor of this proclamation, have been
" " stopped, and made to stay," or, in
" less technical terms, have been seized so
" parading the streets of Norfolk, by the
" crew of the Halifax? If they could, we
" think the Americans will hardly be con-
" tented with a concession on our part,
" which respects the protecting power of
" their flag at the mast-head, but still allows
" us to violate and disturb the peace of their
" towns, high-roads, and even houses.——
" Well, it not being allowed to search *na-*
" *tional* vessels for British seamen, what
" remedy does the Proclamation propose?
" what redress for the grievances which may
" thence accrue to Britain? Precisely such
" remedy and such redress as were obvious
" enough without the Proclamation, and
" such as must, in their nature, be essen-
" tially inefficacious, in the way of support
" to our Navy. The British Captain who
" suspects a deserter to be on board an
" American ship, for instance (the Ameri-
" can refusing to give him up), must write
" to the Admiral of the station, the Admi-
" ral of the station to the Lords Commissioners
" of the Admiralty, the Lords Commissioners
" of the Admiralty to the Secretary of State;
" and thus, having ascended the ladder of
" office in England, you have still to go
" down another ladder of office in Ameri-
" ca, before you can get at your deserter.
" Can any man see, in this circuitous pro-
" cedure, a glimpse of hope, that we shall
" be able to prevent America from continu-
" ing to allure British mariners into her
" service? Several threats, indeed, are de-
" nounced in the Proclamation, against the
" unhappy objects of American seduction:
" but of what weight will these be, or in
" fact, of what weight have they been, (for
" the Proclamation does not alter the law of
" the land in this respect)——of what
" weight therefore have these threats been,
" against the offer of higher wages, and
" the delusive promise of better treatment,
" acting upon illiterate minds? One of
" these denunciations of wrath against Bri-
" tish seamen engaged in foreign service, is
" of so singular a nature, that we cannot
" help mentioning it: it is this, " if Eng-
" lish mariners, so serving, should be taken
" prisoners by any of the States of Barba-
" ry, the British Consul at Tunis, or Al-
" giers, shall not reclaim them!" We must
" close our remarks, by allowing, in the
" fullest sense, the many and weighty dif-
" ficulties which attend our pending con-
" cerns with America; but from the in-
" sight which the Proclamation affords us
" of the present state of the negociation,
" we cannot think, though we greatly
" hope, that those difficulties will be sur-
" mounted, in a way beneficial or even
" equitable to England. We should have
" no objection to concession, provided it
" would but conduct us to a clear and defin-
" ed state of things; but such a concession
" as leaves matters in the very state in which
" it found them, must (as we know by expe-
" rience), inevitably lead to incessant jea-
" lousies, bickerings, and disputes, the
" melancholy termination of which, will
" be the very evil which it is thus attempt-
" ed to avert. Suppose matters to be for
" the present amicably arranged between
" us and the United States, and the basis
" on our part to be the concession contain-
" ed in his Majesty's Proclamation above
" cited; the most prudent conduct of eve-
" ry British Commander on the American
" station, will in future be, certainly to
" prevent desertion, if he can; but if in-
" stances do occur, neither to search for the
" fugitives in American merchant vessels,
" nor to claim them from ships of war,
" but to bear his loss quietly; for most as-
" suredly, the contrary conduct will, in
" most instances, either involve his coun-
" try at large, or himself personally, in an
" endless train of squabbles and disquie-
" tudes, of accusations and retorts, of
" charges and denials; which, if the mat-
" ter relates to himself only will end
" in his recal; if to the British Go-
" vernment, in fresh concessions, or direct
" hostilities."——This will assuredly, be
the consequence. Our naval Officers will
remember, that, for many, many years,
the Admiral upon the Halifax station lived a
very fat and quiet life, without attempting
to make an exertion to recover British sea-

men (thousands of British seamen), inveigled away by the Americans; but, that, the moment an Admiral came, who set seriously about preventing that evil, he was deserted by the government, and recalled; that is to say, *disgraced*, as far as it was in their power to disgrace him.——The proclamation, however, will have no effect upon Admiral Berkeley, who can produce his orders from the Admiralty to stop and search *all* foreign neutral vessels, *without any exception*, for British seamen. With this order the Proclamation is inconsistent; but, the order was in force first.——To be sure the blustering, at the close of the Proclamation, is ludicrous enough; but it is perfectly in character, and will pass for just what it is worth, and not a jot more. It will not prevent a single man from entering the American service, or the service of any other neutral state; but, on the contrary, will operate as an encouragement thereto, it being now *certain*, that when entered, they will be safe from our power.——But, seeing that this sneaking was resolved upon, of what use *to the nation* was it to appoint "George Henry Rose, Esqr." to go to America upon a special mission? of what use can that mission be to us? To him, indeed, it may be of great use. It will give him about four thousand pounds a year of our money, while he remains there; he will have an opportunity of seeing the country; and, when he comes back he will, *as a thing of course*, be settled upon us, *for life*, to the tune of two thousand, or, at least, twelve hundred a year, in addition to the four thousand a year, which, after the death of his father, he is to receive from us, *for life* also, as *Clerk of the Parliaments!* Mr. Erskine, will be coming home much about the same time. There will be a similar pension for him, for, probably forty years yet to come; and, then, hey for appointing another! And so on, pension without end. ——And these are the *vigorous* ministers! The poor hireling of the Courier, who thought that a stand was about to be made against the insolence of the Americans, and who had, accordingly, assumed a very high tone about the dominion of the seas, does, I must do him the justice to say it, seem ashamed at this falling off in his patrons; "but," says he, "it may be said, that, if "we insisted upon searching American "ships of war, they would insist upon "searching our ships of war;" forgetting, poor man, that in repeating my arguments, he had before maintained the *difference* between us and the Americans, and had asserted, that, though we had a right to search their ships, they had no right to search ours.——The truth seems to be, that there was a moment of vigour: a fit as it were; but that, the fit having gone off, the vigour evaporated along with it, and was followed by the native imbecillity of the body. I was all along afraid, that this would be the case; I have, from the first, expressed my fears of it; those fears are now verified, and I am now confirmed in the opinion, that all the "vigorous" measures in Europe, will end in another peace of Amiens, if not a worse, accompanied with a new batch of ambassadors and a new batch of pensioners.

EXPATRIATION.—— My correspondent, S. V. whose letter upon the expatriation of British subjects, I answered in the Register of the 10th instant, has made a reply, which will be found at page 610, in the last Register.——He now agrees with me, that *an occasional* allegiance and alienage would be mischievous; and he does not insist upon his former construction of the *law of England* touching this subject; but, in support of his principle, he makes use of an illustration, and quotes the opinions of Wicquefort and Vattel. As to these opinions, I have never *appealed* to them, I hold them to be erroneous, and I oppose my argument to them as well as to the doctrines of S. V.—— I endeavoured to show, that it was right, that every man should, all his life long, be held to owe allegiance to the *country*, in which he was born and reared up to manhood. There would be an exception, of course, to such as were born of alien parents; and I left undecided the point, whether, in extreme cases, such as that of our revolution, the subject might not withdraw himself from the authority of his *king*, or *government*. I insisted, that every man, during his infancy and youth, contracted an obligation with the *nation*; that the nation were not only prevented from killing him, or leaving him to starve with hunger or perish with cold or from want of care, but that they were *compelled* to nurse, cherish, support, and defend him; and that, therefore, it would be unjust in the extreme, for him to have the right to say, when he was grown up to manhood, I will now not only carry my talents and strength elsewhere, but when it suits me, employ them for the nation's destruction.——In reply to this S. V. says: "It seems to you to be the very "acmé of ingratitude, because when I ar- "rive at manhood, I desert the services of "my *nurse*, who may, in my infancy, have "attended me; because, truly, I have been "in the nurse's arms, fed, administered "to, and unremittantly attended by her, it

" is ingratitude in me, that I do not, all " my life time, continue in my nurse's arms. " Now, really, Mr. Cobbett, when I do " arrive at manhood, am I to be followed " by my nurse, is she to continue these " kind offices to me at a period when they " are no longer necessary, and, if I do not " submit to these tender kindnesses, am " I to be charged with a sin ten times " worse than the sin of witchcraft? Have " I not, without a liability to the charge " of ingratitude, a right to run away (as " you term expatriation) at the age of man- " hood from my nurse? Surely, her " power ceases, when I am able to " elect my place of residence, just in the " same manner as does the power of the " Court of Chancery, the guardian protec- " tor of infants."——Had not S. V. mentioned the Court of Chancery, whose proceedings are well calculated to awaken in one's mind the awful idea of eternity, I should have thought him in jest; for, it is almost incredible that a man so clever, as he evidently is, should, in sober earnest, have had recourse to such a sophism. For an illustrative argument to have any force, there must be no question upon the score of the analogy; and, what analogy is there here? What resemblance is there between the *nation* and the *nurse* with regard to the circumstances and effects under consideration? The nurse is, in due time and manner, *rewarded* for her services to the child; but are the nation rewarded, until he grows up to man's estate, and has, indeed, used his talents or his strength? The nurse comes *voluntarily* to his aid; but the nation are, some or other of them, *compelled* to support and defend him. The nurse, if he die in his youth, *loses nothing* by him (and the same may be said of his parents); but the nation lose all the food, raiment and labour that has been bestowed upon him. The nurse can, whenever she pleases, *withdraw* all her cares from the child; but the nation never can withdraw its cares, that is to say, the protection, the rights, and immunities, of the subject. S. V. complains, that I would not permit him to forego the kind duties of his nurse; whereas I object to the withdrawing of *his* duties from his country.——My argument, above referred to, requires, I think, a better answer than this; and, until it receive a better, I shall be contented to leave the discussion where it is.——I must, however, just notice, that the proclamation, above spoken of, has, in an incidental way, made the declaration, which S. V. was so anxious to obtain in the shape of a *law*, or a *treaty*. It seems to talk of nothing but *mariners* and *sea-faring men* (words of very indefinite signification), but, by the word *others*, introduced afterwards, the warning and declaration extends to *all British subjects*, who may " have been induced to accept of " letters of naturalization, or *certificates of* " *citizenship*, from foreign states," and then comes this declaration, " that no such " letters or certificates do, or can, in *any* " *manner* divest our natural-born subjects of " their allegiance, or in *any degree*, alter " the duty which they owe to us." This is very right, and very proper to be said at this time; but, why not have placed the word *others* in the first part of the sentence as well as in the last? Is it not notorious, that, where one mariner has accepted of certificates of citizenship, there are one hundred, at least, of merchants, manufacturers, land-jobbers, and fund-holders, who have made such acceptance? The declaration is, however, as to its effect upon legal decisions, complete; and, therefore, I hope we shall never again hear of a cargo being released, in our courts of admiralty, upon the ground, that the owner (a British subject expatriated) is become a citizen of the American States, which cargo would have been condemned, if the owner had been regarded as a British subject. For instance, an American ship is taken by one of our men of war, having on board a cargo of wine, going from France, the property of the house of Turncoat and Co. residing at Philadelphia, but native subjects of England; and, as all British subjects are forbidden to trade with the enemy, the cargo is good prize; but, in come the advocates of Turncoat and Co. and plead, that their clients are become *citizens of the American States*, and that, therefore, their cargo is not good prize. If decisions have, upon such a plea, taken place in favour of the captured, I hope we shall now hear no more of them; and, if our naval officers, upon the American station, look out sharp, and make a good use of the intelligence which may be easily obtained in those resorts of rascality, the sea-ports of America, they will, in a pecuniary point of view, not have to regret being placed upon that station.

Poor Laws.——The only part of Mr. Whitbread's project that much has been said about, is that which related to the establishment of parochial schools, and that too would, probably have been forgotten by this time had I not thought it right to resent the unjust aspersion upon the people of England, contained in the preamble of his bill.

This has drawn forth a good deal of angry language from some of those Scotchmen, whose natural partiality is greater than their justice or their sense, and who, in indulging that partiality quite overlook the circumstance, that some degree of national partiality may be expected to be entertained by Englishmen as well as Scotchmen. Amongst the persons here described, my correspondent, SAWNEY, whose letter will be found in the present volume, at page 540, is, I think, the most conspicuous. He has now sent me another letter, by way of answer to my short remarks upon his former one (see page 531), a part of which last letter I shall here insert, leaving out more than two-thirds of it, which consisted of mere effusions of *wit* and *politeness*, which, as my readers have had a sufficient specimen of them, in his former letter, it would be waste of paper to commit to the press.——He appealed to an estimate of Lord Buchan, in order to shew, that Scotland had surpassed England in *increase* of population; and, without attempting to stir the question, whether either of them had *really increased*, I observed, that I could not submit to be decided by any loose estimate; and that the Lord Buchan was no better authority than Gregory King, who, in his famous estimate, preserved with such care in the archives of that wise and useful institution, the British Museum, was so minute as to include the number of *rabbits* in the kingdom.—Upon this "SAWNEY" remarks, that I question the *correctness* of Lord Buchan and Gregory King *only* because they were *too minute*. This is true in words, but false in meaning. I question their correctness because I find a statement in their estimates, of the correctness of which it was *impossible* that they could possess, or come at, any proof; and, finding this, I have a right to conclude, that the whole of the estimate is mere random guess. If, for instance, a man were to tell us, that he had ascertained the number of *flies* in this kingdom in the month of July last; should we not laugh at him? Should we cite his estimate as an *authority* wherewith to oppose an argument, built upon acknowledged, well-known, and undeniable facts? And to come at a knowledge of the number of flies is not *more* difficult than to come at a knowledge of the number of rabbits, because both are impossible.——But now for "SAWNEY'S" answer to my argument, founded upon the fact, that large sums of money were annually granted by parliament, that is to say, out of the fruit of the labour of the people of England, for the purpose of *furnishing food* and *making work* for the labourers of Scotland, in order to *prevent those labourers from emigrating to America*. This, I said, could not be denied, and, then I drew the conclusion, that the state of Scotland, with respect to its labourers, was not such as to be held up as an example for England; adding, that nothing ever was so outrageously impudent and insolent, as to charge the labourers of England with laziness and vice, and to bid to look, for an example, to the industrious and virtuous labourers of Scotland, and that, too, at the very time, when the former were compelled to give up part of the fruit of their labour to furnish food for the latter, in order to prevent them from wandering away from their country.——Let us hear "Sawney's" answer to this:——"I come now to "the grants of money you speak of, as "drawn from the people of England for "the support of the Scotch. This, I un- "derstand, is your *Crown* battery, from "which you are to maul us without "mercy—it is a *sunk* battery to me," [he will be *witty* still] "for the deuce take me "if I know what you mean. For my "part, I am not aware of any annual grants "made to Scotland, but what are of a very "*trivial* kind indeed.—Do you *allude* to "the money advanced by government to "further that *important* undertaking the "Caledonian Canal, which is to be large "enough to *float ships of war* from the "Murray Firth to the opposite side of the "island? I can only say, *I never under- "stood*, that this pecuniary aid from the "public funds, was intended for the *advan- "tage* of Scotland in *particular*; but on "the contrary, that it was expected, that "it shall produce considerable benefit to "the whole of the United Kingdom; and "although 70 or 80,000 pounds laid out "on a work of this sort should afford bread "to a few hundreds of *hardy, frugal-liv- "ing Scotchmen*, it appears to me, that the "act is no less creditable to the authors of "it than another of the same kind is "honourable to the memories of those who "bestowed ten times the sum for the "building of St. Paul's Church in London, "at a time, too, when money was six "times more valuable than it is at present, "and all, very probably, for a purpose not "more substantial than to gratify the va- "nity of her *languid, gormandizing Citi- "zens*.—In England, there are grants in- "numerable of this description; and yet "you choose to say, "Nothing, surely, "" was ever so outrageously impudent "" and insolent as this." Pray, Mr. Cob- "bett, what is it? You must not expect

" to tame us into a supple complaisance by " merely laying your hand on your hag- " gling rapier ; *na*, *na*, come, sir, draw— " and you shall find that we are ready to " give you such a reception, as all rude " invaders of Old Scotia justly deserve. " —I am, Sir, yours, &c.——SAWNEY. " —*Peterhead, the 10th of October*, 1807."

—My friend Sawney has adopted the mode of his countryman the advocate : " Hoot, " away mon ! *admet* the foct for the sake " of the eargument, an' gin you fail i' th' " eargument, *quorry* the foct." But, " na, " na," this will not do " Sawney ;" for though you *wittily* say, " the *deuce* take me " if I know what you mean by grants, annu- " ally made to support Scotch labourers, " out of the fruit of the labour of the peo- " ple of England," the *public*, who have read page 492 of this volume, know very well what I mean. I have there stated, that 70.000 pounds a year, has, for many years past been granted, out of the taxes of Great Britain, of which Scotland pays less than a *seventeenth* part, to *make work* for the labourers of Scotland ; that 17,000 pounds a year has been granted to *send food* to the said labourers in kind ; and, that both grants have been made *expressly* to prevent the labourers of Scotland from emigrating, that is to say, from wandering away from their country. Do you call this an " *allusion*," Sir ?——As to the " *important*" work of cutting a passage for ships of war *across this island*, if accomplished, it would be an act of national *suicide* ; but, there is no fear of that, and, besides, it is expressly stated in the report, upon which the grant is founded, that the *chief immediate object is*, to prevent Scotch labourers from emigrating. Mr. " Sawney " seems to think it no harm for his countrymen to get a little bread out of this 70 or 80 thousand pounds grant ; but, Sir, it is that much *each year* ; it has been so for several years, and there is like to be no end to it.——What resemblance is there in the case cited by him of the grant for building St. Paul's church and the case before us ? The grant in the former case came out of the pockets of the people in whose country the building was erected, and if the work did gratify the vanity of the " languid and gor- " mandizing citizens," *they paid* for the gratification.—— " In England," he says, " there are grants *innumerable* of this de- " scription." I not only *quorry*, but I *deny* the fact ; and, let him, if he can, point me out one grant of the kind in England. All our roads, all our bridges, all our canals, are made and repaired by individuals, parishes, or counties ; and, indeed, a man must have an uncommon stock of assurance, to assert, that money is granted, in England, that *innumerable* grants are made out of the exchequer, in England, to make work or to furnish food for the people, in order to prevent them from emigrating, such a thing never having been heard of since England was England.

PORTUGAL.——The affairs of this country seem to be in " *an unsatisfactory state*," as lord Castlereagh said of Europe, at the peace of Amiens. In fact, there is another royal government, which, in all human probability, is just going to expire ; for, as to the Brazil adventure, it is so very romantic as to merit not a moment of serious attention. The royal family may *go* there, to be sure ; but, what are they to *do* there ? To reign ? The idea is absurd.——The Morning Chronicle says, speaking upon the situation of Portugal, and the talked-of emigration of the royal family, " The *most* extra- " ordinary part of this *most* important affair " is, that the people are in the *most* perfect " tranquillity. They hear of the prepara- " tions by which they are to be deprived of " their sovereign, of their independence, " probably of their means of livelihood, " without a murmur. A stupid torpor has " lulled them into perfect acquiescence, and " they seem indifferent to the fate of their " country."——The people, doubtless, feel wonderful sorrow, at the prospect of being " *deprived* " of their sovereign ; for, not to suppose that would be to expose one's self to the charge of being a Jacobin and Leveller ; than which, of course, it is better to be thought a highway robber ; but, though they may have very sublime ideas of *independence*, they cannot well be deprived of the " means of *livelihood*, " unless it so happens, that the vineyards and the corn fields and the meadows cease to bear, upon the departure of the Royal Family, which is, indeed, possible, but not very probable. There is no effect without an efficient cause ; and, *if* the feelings of the people of Portugal, upon this occasion, be what they are described by the Morning Chronicle, the writer of that paper may be assured, that the people are under very little apprehension of *a change for the worse* ; for, if they were, they would not be perfectly indifferent as to the great change, which they see approaching. The people of Portugal may be very " *stupid*;" but, the most stupid creatures have sense and discernment enough to know what *they like*, and to perceive whether they are in the enjoyment of it. There are degrees in slavery, and in misery of all sorts ; and, when you see any one perfectly indifferent as to a change that is about to take place, be assured that he is

persuaded that that change cannot be for the worse. All the while that the farmer has hopes of getting in his hay in such a state that it may be of some use in the way of food for his cattle, he feels some degree of anxiety about the weather; as the showers succeed each other, his anxiety becomes less and less, till, at last, when he knows that what he called hay a week ago, is now merely muck, his anxiety ceases. A man, going to the gallows, would, for want of time to reflect, tremble at a thunderbolt striking the sledge; but, the Portuguese have had time to reflect upon the expected change; and, therefore, *if* they are in that state of feeling, or, rather, of want of feeling, which is so feelingly described by the writer of the Morning Chronicle, he may comfort himself with the assurance, that, in *their* view of things, the change would not be for the worse.——Mind, I give no opinion of my own about the effects which the change would have upon the people of Portugal, because I know nothing at all about the nature of their government, or the conduct and character of their rulers. I am, therefore, compelled to reason upon hypothesis; but, I think, I may venture to assert, that, if the people of Portugal are suffered to enjoy the fair fruits of their labour; if they are not ground down to the earth by a set of villains who have, by one means or another obtained the power of making them sweat drops of blood in order to support those villains in idleness and profligacy; if the liberty of expressing their thoughts, either verbally or in writing, be not taken from them; if one part of them are not armed and stationed about the country for the purpose of keeping the other part in awe and plundering them without mercy, in order to fatten successive swarms of corruptors and peculators; if they have not seen honour after honour of their country bartered away for the advantage or convenience of those whose duty it was to maintain those honours, until they have nothing left worthy of being called a country; if this be *not* the case (and I never heard that it was the case in Portugal, notwithstanding that there long has been an English factory in that country, and necessarily great intercourse with it) then I venture to assert, that the Morning Chronicle is misinformed, and that the Portuguese are *not* so indifferent as to the expected change, as he describes them to be.——The principal cause of the successes of Napoleon has been a persuasion, in the people of the conquered countries, that no change could be for the worse. A reliance has been placed upon *armies*; but armies are always, when the hour of trial comes, the least to be relied upon, in such a state of things. While the enemy is at a distance, an army is kept in a disjointed state; if a regiment mutiny, two or three can be brought against it; and thus, while soldiers are used to overawe the people, they are also used to keep each other up to the sticking place. But, when the enemy enters, all is changed in a moment. The bands are all broken; and those who before haughtily *commanded*, are now reduced to *wheedle*; and, from the wheedling of soldiers, there is but one step to their revolt, especially when they have the people in general with them. The reliance, to be safe, must be upon the hearts of the mass of the people. There is no other, and, indeed, there *ought* to be no other, defence of governments.

Since writing the first article in this Summary, I have received the half-official defence of the Proclamation, the pitiful contents of which defence, I will remark upon in my next. It is misery itself. Never was any thing so shuffling, so mean, so despicable in every respect.——In the mean while, I think it right to insert, below, an excellent article upon the subject, from the Morning Post newspaper, protesting, however, against the sentiments of *the last two sentences*, except as far as they go in commendation of Admiral Berkeley. No; it will not do to attempt to *throw the blame upon the late ministers*. They had nothing to do with the matter. They could not *possibly* have any knowledge of the case. It is all the work of the present set, and pretty work it is! The ministers have, however, the consolation to know, that it has merited and received, the commendations of the Morning Chronicle; and certainly to silence the patrons of that paper was, in their usual view of things, an object worth a tolerably lumping sacrifice.

ON THE PROCLAMATION.

Taken from the Morning Post newspaper of the 20th inst.

The proclamation respecting British seamen engaged in foreign service, inserted in our paper of yesterday, is a document of so much importance as to call for some serious observations from us. We had expected that the firmness of the present cabinet, whose general conduct claims not only our commendation, but the gratitude of the country, could not have been brought to concede so strong and justifiable a right as that of searching any vessels, in case of positive information that British deserters were serving

on board. To give up the right of searching neutral ships of war generally, is a totally different concession from that which relinquishes the right of search in the case of positive information that British seamen are serving on board a neutral vessel of war. Every nation that values its own independence, must be disposed to respect the rights of other countries, if it be actuated by principles of reciprocal consideration. The act of inticing our seamen to desert their duty, is manifestly an act of hostility against us, as, by diminishing our means of resistance to an enemy, it renders us less capable of maintaining our independence. Whilst the Americans, therefore, or rather the American government, not only permit but authorise such conduct, we cannot be readily persuaded to approve of giving up the right of searching their vessels of every description. If the right of searching ships of war generally were only conceded, we should not perhaps have objected to such an instance of moderation on the part of our ministers. But when it is notorious, from irrefragable documents, not only that the American officers receive our deserters, but that the American government, without any qualification, justifies the transaction, we cannot perceive any good ground for abandoning the right of searching even ships of war, in case of positive information that British deserters are on board. The exercise of such a right would, of course, and must depend on the circumstances of the case. If no deserters should be found, the officers exercising such interference with the flag of a neutral nation, would necessarily be subjected to the consequences of the act. But if it should be found, that, notwithstanding the assertion of the commander of the neutral ship of war, British seamen were by positive information proved to be on board, we do not see, how, consistently with the interests of this country, a British commander could avoid exercising the right of search. To concede the right generally, and to insist upon it under particular circumstances, are very different cases. Every Englishman's house is his castle, and must not be forced, unless under positive information, that its contents are exempted by law from domiciliary protection. Why then should we, as a nation, extend to the vessels of other nations, upon an element, on which we have rule, an exemption which we do not grant to the most favoured inhabitants amongst ourselves. The law of nations, if it have any influence on the affairs of great communities, must subject them collectively, equally with individuals under municipal regulations, to the principles of universal justice. It is no matter whether a subject conceal a traitor, or a neutral vessel a deserter, whom its commander enticed from his duty and allegiance; the right of search is the same, after ineffectual application for his surrender. The whole merit of the case turns upon the previous information, and the demand and refusal to give up the offender. Upon this ground it is that we do not approve of the terms of the late proclamation, or of the recall of Admiral Berkeley, who appears to us to have acted with all necessary moderation and forbearance. It is our opinion, that in both cases too much has been conceded to the Gallic party in America. Besides the recall of an excellent officer from a station, on which he had behaved with such judgment and firmness, may have very serious effect upon the conduct of other officers, who may hereafter be employed upon that service. The negligence of the magistracy of London during the riots in the year 1780, is said to have proceeded from the trial of a Surrey magistrate for his life, a few years before, for having done his duty on a similar occasion. If officers are to be exposed to recall and comparative disgrace, for having acted under difficult circumstances, to the best of their judgment, for the honour and interest of their country, there must be an end of our superiority at sea, and perhaps to our protection at home. For our own part, we must confess that we should have preferred the more decisive determination of making known to all powers, that our officers would seize and carry off British seamen, wherever they could find them, without caring whether they were on the territory, or on board the ship of a neutral power. Is it by pursuing a different line of conduct, that we can hope successfully to continue a contest with an enemy, whose uniform and studied practice it is to convert every thing that bears a neutral character to the advancement of his own perfidious views, and the consequent detriment of the essential interests of Britain? But it may be argued, that, by this concession, we accomplish a great object in adjusting our differences with America. For our own part, we never could bring ourselves to suppose that the Americans, notwithstanding their violence and abuse, would hazard a contest with us; and though our differences with America may be adjusted, we see no likelihood that the system of enticing and encouraging our seamen to desert will be done away, or even checked. By the proclamation, our officers are first to claim the men of the neutral captain! if he refuse to give them up, we are then to give notice to the British command-

er in chief of the squadron under whose orders such officers are serving; the commander in chief is to transmit to our minister, resident at the seat of government of the state to which the said ships belong, or to the Lords of the Admiralty. Such a mode of proceeding, it must be obvious to every one, will apply but a slow and inadequate remedy to the evil; for, whilst the tedious process is taking place, the seamen will have sailed in the ships to which they have deserted, and even should they return to the ports of the power to which the ships belong, means will easily be found to effect the escape of the offenders, without any means of redress being left to us—a fatal instance of the mischievous tendency of our relinquishing any part of our long established right of sovereignty on the ocean. But, though we can neither approve of the concession thus made to the Americans, nor of the recall of an admiral who has so meritoriously deported himself, we must consider both as necessary consequences arising out of the wretched and pusillanimous policy of our late incapable ministry. They had gone so far in their concessions to the American government, and the public faith was so far pledged by them to the performance of such timid stipulations, that it might prove injurious to our national character, for any administration succeeding to the reins of government, to absolve the country from the wretched obligation, or avoid recalling a meritorious officer, who, on so important an occasion, had conducted himself with such ability, firmness, and sound discretion.

POOR LAWS.

SIR,——You take advantage of the preamble of a bill lately brought into parliament, to introduce some ill-natured, and, as I conceive, ill founded remarks on the Scotch nation. The bill professes to have in view the promotion of morality and virtue, and the formation of better members of society; and, it states that this end is to be attained by the instruction of youth. "Whereas the instruction of youth tends materially to the promotion of morality and virtue, and the formation of good members of society, as is exemplified in a neighbouring nation, &c." or words to that effect. I have read several letters to you on the subject, and your observations in reply. It appears to me, Mr. Cobbett, that in the *very outset* you have not stated the matter fairly, and that this has given rise to all the subsequent discussion. You lay hold of national pride and prejudice, and touch on points that have not, in my opinion, the least bearing on the question.—Why not simply prove that instruction does *not*, or *cannot* promote morality and virtue; that this is not exemplified in a neighbouring nation; and that Parochial Schools do *not* tend to convey the instruction stated to be so requisite. You attack the *wording* of the preamble, but you do not make these words the ground work of your observations. You forget your text, and make a commentary on some other chapter or verse. Instead of proving the falsehood of the proposition contained in the preamble, you proceed to describe a picture of domestic happiness in Hampshire. *A comfortable house, a neat and well trimmed garden;* an affectionate father, and a wife and children equally affectionate. Then you fly off into a comparison of population and taxation; the description of a Scotch cabbin; a bed of heath; a cale yard. All this is very fine, but is it to the purpose? It proves that the Hampshire man though he could not read or write, was moral, virtuous, and a good member of society; but, does it prove that there would not be many more such members of society if instruction were more general? The Scotchman, though he could both read and write had a poor hovel; a bed of heath, and a cale yard; but, was this owing to the time lost in his education, and is it not probable that this state of poverty was much alleviated by reading in his bible, that there is another and a better world? The preamble of the bill, which gives you so much offence, says not a word about superior industry, comfort, neatness, and cleanliness. I grant that in these respects the English are superior to any nation I know. Having said this much, I would wish to narrow the question to the *words* or *meaning* of the preamble, which has caused so much ill blood between you and my countrymen the Scotch; namely, whether the Scotch be really more moral and virtuous than their neighbours the English; and, if they are, whether this superiority arises from their better education or not? I was born in Scotland, and there spent the greatest part of my life. I have been at different times, and for many months together in various parts of it. I have been for some years over a considerable part of this kingdom, and have also been over a good deal of England. I have thus had an opportunity of comparing the *morals* of the three nations. I need not say to which I give the preference. My origin will at once inform you. But, Mr. Cobbett, if you will not believe *me*, will not the concurring testimony of all travellers who have been in Scotland have any weight? Will not their calendars of crimes, compa-

ratively small, produce conviction? Is not a Scotch regiment, as you know, notoriously much less given to drunkenness and *marauding* than an English one? You attribute the increase of poverty and vice to increased taxation. I do not deny that a man who is poor has more temptation to commit crimes, than if he enjoyed comfort and independence; but, I assert, that whether poor or rich, in misery or in affluence, the more *uninstructed* a man is in *religious* and *moral* duties, the more is he apt to become unprincipled, and the more will crimes prevail. I will likewise venture to assert, that unless a man *can* read, he cannot be properly and effectually instructed in religion and morality. Going to church once a week, and hearing a sermon couched in fine language, one half of which he does not understand, will not, I apprehend, contribute much to enlighten him. The parents not able to read themselves, and not endowed with much eloquence, cannot convey adequate notions on the subject. But, you will say they hold up a good example, and example is better than precept. So it is, Mr. Cobbett, but both united are better than either separately. I agree with you that the great body of the people, labourers and mechanics, have nothing to do with *learning*, and that knowledge does not consist of *words*, but of *things, facts, ideas*. Surely, therefore, a man who can plough and harrow *as well* as his neighbour, and can at the same time *read*, has a *chance* of being better informed than the man who cannot read. I know that reading will not make a better ploughman or mechanic; but, I do think, that if *properly* directed by *parents and teachers*, as no doubt it would be, reading might have a very considerable effect in forming the morals. If religion and morality were carefully instilled into a young man from his infancy, to the period when he goes from under the eye of his parents into the world, (and this I have asserted can only be effectually done by learning him to read), I am of opinion that the impression would remain for a long time, and it is at this early and inexperienced period that vice makes its most successful approaches. You are of opinion, that the ambition of parents will induce a *sufficient* number to give their children a proper education; and that, therefore, they should be left to themselves. I am of the very same way of thinking, but then, I conceive that the *facility* of education should be granted; in other words, parochial schools should be established, that such as do choose may instruct their children, and every encouragement should be held out to them to do so. You accuse most of the Scotch who have written to you on the subject, of not answering your remarks on the grants of *public* money, to build bridges and make roads in certain districts of *Scotland*. Had I your abilities, Mr. Cobbett, I would not be afraid to meet you on this ground; but, I confess I do not see how it can affect the argument. Whether these sums have or have not been granted properly, the question of morality and virtue arising from instruction must remain the same. Were I so situated that I could make the proper references, or had I such a good memory, or such a good library by me as you have, Mr. Cobbett, I have no doubt but I could stumble upon grants of *public* money for the improvement of harbours, roads, streets, &c. &c. in *England*, and probably to a *much* greater amount than the sums you allude to.—I am your obedient servant,—Dun Scotus.—*Ireland, Oct.* 10, 1807.

BAGGAGE WAGGONS.

Sir,——While my horses were baiting at a small inn in a village, I took up a provincial paper, and the first thing that caught my eye was an advertisement or notice, that in pursuance of the mutiny act lately passed, the quarter session of Hampshire had *ordered* the allowance to be increased to farmers, whose waggons or carts should be pressed to carry military baggage. I immediately thought that an innovation had been made in the former mutiny act, merely to put money into the pockets of "the landed interest," at the expence of the public at large. At the end of the next fifteen miles, I paid my annual visit to an old tenant, whose circumstances enable him to live very comfortably; and as he is not prone to grumble like the generality of farmers, I am inclined to give credit to what he says. I knew that his neighbourhood was usually filled with military, and therefore congratulated him on the increased allowance he was to receive. He shook his head, saying in a low tone scarcely audible, "I wish they would carry their own baggage." I observed he spoke this with more than usual earnestness, and as the pay was much greater per mile than he received for fetching coals for a friend of mine living in the neighbourhood, I pressed him to tell me why he was dissatisfied. "The truth is, Sir," he replied, "no pay they can fairly give us, will compensate for the mischief we receive. Why, Sir, this summer my crops though not quite so abundant as my neighbours, ripened exceedingly well, and were cut in as fine weather as a farmer could

wish for, I had just begun to carry when a summons came for two of my waggons (I had but three) to be at a town three miles off early on the following morning, and there to take up military baggage, and carry it so far that my teams could not return till the day after. On the third day a drizzling rain set in, and continued (more or less heavy) for five or six days. Thus my harvest was retarded, and I was at the expence of keeping my harvest men at least ten days longer than I should have done, and the appearance of my corn is so much injured, that I must either submit to sell it at a very inferior price, or consume it in my own family. Another time they overloaded one of my waggons so much, that the best horse I ever had died in their service. And all this too, Sir, when at the very place where my waggons take up the baggage, there are not less than thirty or forty, sometimes more, horses with a proportionate number of waggons and drivers kept by government, doing nothing, except now and then carrying coals (for the contractor) to the barracks. The injury too they do a farmer in making his men restless and discontented is incalculable.—One would think, Mr. Cobbett, that to a government disposed, as I believe the present to be, to economy, it would be necessary only to mention an opportunity of saving expence, and at the same time relieving an industrious part of the community from an irksome service. But it has been recommended to some of our rulers, that the employment of the waggon train in carrying a part, if not the whole of the baggage attached to regiments passing within a reasonable distance from the stations where those corps are quartered, would be a considerable saving to the public at large, and to the farmers in particular, and yet no alteration has taken place.—Perhaps, the recommendation was not made to the heads of the proper department, and therefore was disregarded. It is certainly no easy matter for a plain dealing man to know where, and how to recommend any improvement in the minor concerns of government. And, as no publication is so likely as yours to be read by the persons, whoever they may be, under whose superintendance such an alteration as I have alluded to, would come, I take the liberty of requesting you either to insert this letter, or to put my ideas on the subject in your own more forcible language, at your earliest convenience.——H. H.——*Oct.* 14, 1807.

DOMINION OF THE SEAS.

Sir,——The subject of the laws and rights of nations being, in my opinion, much misconceived, permit me to use my endeavours to place it in its proper light. That nations have rights as well as individuals, and laws, too, cannot for a moment be doubted; but that these cannot be enforced nor observed with the same rigour as those of private persons, arises from the different relations which states and individuals bear to each other: in the one, the makers of the laws are the subjects of them; with the other there is a protecting power which can enforce their observance. The essence of every national law is, that it shall not bend to the will of any individual; the law of nations, on the contrary, is for ever liable to that unjust controul, and this it is which has caused some men to deny that it has any existence. The rights of nations, like those of individuals, arise from their acquisitions in society, and such is the nature of man, that it is not always requisite to scrutinise too severely into the origin of these acquisitions; though it is at all times justifiable to resist the encroachments of power, whether public or private; for, though time may legalize the acquisitions of conquest or fraud, nothing can diminish their original injustice. To deny the rights and the laws of nations would be to realize that savage state of nature, which has hardly ever existed but in the warm region of a poetical fancy, and yet to attribute to them any higher origin than the tacit or express conventions of society arising from a sense of interest, is to seek for, in metaphysical refinement, that which exists only in practical convenience. These maxims referred to the conduct of Great Britain in asserting the Dominion of the Seas, and violating the rights of neutral nations, will, I trust, justify her in a departure from the general principles of the laws of nations; which not being capable of being considered in any other light than a compact among a few individuals, cease to be binding upon the rest when they are so far violated by one as to affect their common or individual safety.——I remain, &c.—W. BURDON.—*No. 7, Somerset Street, Portman Square.*

DOMINION OF THE SEAS.

Sir;—Because you have thought it right to insert do I feel myself disposed to answer the further observations of your correspondent R. R. who seems to be surcharged with ire in consequence of my having (under the supposition that it must have been owing to some mistake that his former letter represented him as talking about "Occupancy OR *first* possession") kindly agreed to accept his real meaning to be Occupancy or *present* possession! Now, how-

ever, that he solemnly assures me, that he meant *first* possession, Iam bound to believe him, although all our lexicographers and writers good and bad, and indeed all men women and children (himself only excepted), foolishly suppose with me that the word Occupancy means not *first* but present or actual possession.—It did indeed appear to me, that if he actually meant *first* possession, two claimants, the one relying upon his having been the *first* possessor and the other upon the ground of his being the actual *occupant*, would, upon resorting to your correspondent's rule, be puzzled to ascertain to which of them it awarded the right.—But he says that "that rule being that occupancy or first possession confers right, he cannot see any puzzle in the business", and then he puts the following case to shew that all would be perfectly clear.—"If a ship (whose master is A.) occupy a certain station in the River Thames and is dispossessed of it by force by another ship (B. being her master) there are two claimants, the first occupant and present occupier."—We should I think expect to hear A. maintain that his ship had the first possession, and that therefore he was entitled under the rule, whilst B. with equal plausibility would reply, that self same rule says the right is with me as the occupant.—But, Sir, only observe with what consummate dexterity the framer of this wonder-working rule, in pronouncing judgement eclipses the renowned Solomon, whose fame suffers not less in the comparison with your correspondent than does that of Solon with the brewer and great modern law-giver Whitbread.—"My rule being" (says R. R.) that (what?) "that first possession confers right, the first occupant (A.) has the right," so that you see, Sir, he here finds it convenient to drop that half of his rule, under which B. would be entitled, and that rule is no longer OCCUPANCY or first possession, but *first possession only*.—"But," he proceeds, "if the first ship had left the station, and the other had taken possession of it, and the first had returned and claimed it, the present occupier (B) would clearly be entitled to retain it." Upon what ground? A. will say, 'you told me in the former case that I had the right, because your rule gives it to the first possessor, and, lo! I was in this latter case also the first possessor.' No, no, says the judge, you are not Mr. A. "because, in abandoning the station you relinquished your right to it, and it again became in common." How can that be rejoins A. seeing that when a man of the name of *Wroc*, asserted in opposition to your doctrine, that a first possessor could not transmit the right which he acquired by such possession; you, Mr. Judge, did positively assert, that "*it was never stated by you that the right ceased with the possession.*" You may, A. would probably add, tell me again and again, as you have done in p. 571, that "it is much better to resort at once to reason, for a rule to ascertain the justice or injustice of an action, than to resort to human courts;" but after the sample of reason which you have exhibited, I shall be foolish enough to seek for justice from a court and jury. Such, Mr. Cobbett, are the contradictions and absurdities into which these sticklers for the freedom of the seas uniformly fall!! Having after the above manner cleared the ground (as he says) from the impediments, your correspondent comes to the discussion of the principle of the right, and from his stile of "clearing the ground" it was to have been expected that his reasoning upon the principle would have beamed upon us with all the radiance of the meridian sun. He presumes that "I confound occupancy of "dominion with occupancy of the matter "which confers dominion," and says, p. 571, that "the distinction which he takes between dominion over the earth and over the sea is this, in the one the right to the sovereignty is acquired by the possession or occupancy of the soil itself, in the other case no right to the sovereignty is acquired, because the sea is *not capable of being actually possessed from its nature*"; but he some how or other forgets to point out the one thing needful, which is WHAT that quality in the nature of the sea is, which renders it incapable of being actually possessed and prevents one nation from acquiring a sovereignty over other nations with respect to it.—At present his assertion is a merely gratuitous one.—Although however the sea is incapable of being actually possessed from its nature, yet the gentleman contends that all nations have a right to it by occupancy! Nay, that a *certain portion* of this self-same sea may belong EXCLUSIVELY to nations!! What that certain portion is he does not, however, define, but it extends it seems "as far as "may be necessary for *navigating their ves-* "*sels.*" Here again I must candidly confess that I am unable to comprehend what he means.—There is certainly something which intercepts the sun's rays, possibly my dulness. He surely cannot intend that as it is necessary, for instance, for the English, the French, the Dutch and many other nations to steer one and the same course in going to their respective settlements abroad, at least, for a considerable part of the passage, so the

sea through which they *navigate their vessels* in going there belongs EXCLUSIVELY to *each* of them! If I were not afraid that he would call it an unwarrantable presumption (as he did my well intended supposition that he meant present and not first possession,) I should imagine his meaning to be that so much of the sea as any particular vessel covers for the time being belongs exclusively not to the nation to which the vessel belongs but to the owner of the vessel. But then we should be at sea again, for want of knowing *what* there is in the "*nature of* "*the sea*," seeing that it admits of *partial occupancy* and of "exclusive right" as to a certain portion of it, which constitutes an obstacle to a dominion as extensive as we contend for.——Why, for example, may not the king upon this ground of occupancy, be entitled to the sovereignty of the Bristol Channel, because English vessels occupy it, as much as to the sovereignty of England because England is occupied by Englishmen. What is there, I ask, in the *nature* of the thing which stands in the way of the right? Let it not be understood, that I am placing our claim to the dominion of the sea, upon the ground of occupancy, for I have said so much upon it only to show that there is nothing substantial in the distinction which hath been taken.——The gentleman hath not ventured to touch upon that part of my former letter, where, (after showing that all the cases which he had stated were inapplicable to the point in dispute, inasmuch as the right there was, under the guarantee of some established law,) I brought the question to a focus in the following proposition:—Suppose, that when all things were in common, two individuals, or two tribes, were equally desirous of possessing any particular unoccupied spot or territory, natural reason would not dictate that it belonged to one of them rather than to the other; and there would be no established law in such a state, to be appealed to or to which either would be bound to submit? I asked him which he supposed would decide the point but FORCE? That question he has not attempted to answer.—It shall be conceded to him that the sea was, like the earth, originally in common and (for argument's sake) that the sea unlike the earth did not "from its nature" admit of a sovereignty being acquired in it by occupancy merely; would it follow that this nation cannot have acquired a right to such a sovereignty by any other means or upon any other ground? Is the writer ignorant that other nations have fought and struggled hard with us in order that they might *themselves* possess that very sovereignty which we have conquered? Is he indeed ignorant that after such a contest, RIGHT to the object contended for, is *with the conqueror*? Does he discern aught of reason or natural justice in the outcry raised against us by the vanquished nations for maintaining that dominion which they strove to secure for themselves, and which they will contend for once again if by suffering that dominion to slacken in our grasp they discover any chance of success? Why did he not, I ask him, join issue with me upon the proposition which I laid down instead of evading it by the subterfuge that that proposition formed a part of what was said about the "expediency of the measure?" When in a farm yard I have been an observer of a battle between two cocks, it has often amused me to see one of them after being beaten and after running from his opponent as fast as his legs could carry him, stop when at a safe distance and *crow* defiance. So, Sir, does this Mr. R. R. after having fled from the argument with all due speed stop all at once and like the worsted cock ask, "If I still hold out?" He asks me also, if after what he has advanced I will "insinuate that reason is not the best "rule to determine whether the dominion "of the sea is just or unjust?" To which my answer is, that I never insinuated any thing to the contrary.—What the deuce should decide the point as to the right (in the absence of positive law) but reason? The question is, as between ourselves, who has the true conception of the thing, he with his reason or I with mine? Why did he not apply his reason in commenting upon the proposition which I stated in my last letter?—He assures me that it is much better to imbibe reason "at the pure source of "the stream" I thank him heartily for his information, and in return advise him sincerely before he writes a third time against our right to the Dominion of the Sea, to repair once more to that same stream, and (as the common people say) mend his draught.—I remain, Sir an admirer of your patriotic exertions and your well wisher ——WROC.——*Lincoln's Inn, October* 21, 1807.

THE ARMY.

SIR,——I believe it has excited the surprise of a great part of the community, that ministers have not before this time carried, either Mr. Windham's, or some other permanent plan into execution for the defence of the country. No one will deny, but that the situation of Europe at present, imperiously calls for a measure, the effects of

which are to be in some degree co-existent with the other branches of our constitutional law. The advantages derived from an institution when once established, are great in proportion as the plan is persevered in. It assimilates with the spirit and character of a nation, its operation is steady and uniform, and the benefits obtained from it lasting and durable. Measures of expediency, without any reference to their ultimate effects, are always hurtful in as far as relates to internal government. They have a tendency to throw a country into an unnatural state, which time reduces to its true level; they render the constitution sickly and feeble; give it an artificial strength during their operation; and when that ceases the state falls below the common standard of health and security. The operation of great and permanent principles should alone be permitted in legislation: it is never well administered when left to the uncertain effects of transitory causes. The many military plans and regulations we have had in this country for some years back, have for these reasons appeared to me prejudicial and improper. Excepting Mr. Windham's late measure with regard to the levée en masse, which has not yet been acted upon, none of them seem to possess the character of what may be called, a general and comprehensive plan.—There is something peculiarly absurd in the idea, of our supporting a regular land force, sufficient to repel an enemy determined to invade us; and, at the same time, to protect our numerous colonies. Our limited population, our manufactures, the state of our finances, and the extent of coast to be guarded; all conspire against such an opinion. France is a military nation, has existed for many years by conquest, and has on foot a larger army than the aggregate force of many of the European states put together. We have to support a large marine, which necessarily gives employment to many who would otherwise become soldiers. Our attention is divided betwixt the army and navy, which makes the institution of both more imperfect than they would otherwise be.—France, on the contrary, deprived of a navy, devotes her whole attention to the perfection of her military force; and the wars she has been engaged in since the revolution, has brought it to as high a pitch of excellence, as perhaps it will admit of. It is also worthy of remark, that the conscripts which she has successively drawn from her population, to increase and fill up the deficiency of her armies, have in the course of a very short period of time (from the capacity and diligence of her officers) fought by the side of veterans, who have been constantly in the field, since the commencement of the revolutionary war. We have been for many years alarmed with fears of invasion, and are still, and will be, in all probability, continually exposed to them, while France is our rival and a military nation. What I would propose, therefore, in order to counterpoise in some degree her large army, is a permanent plan of defence capable of producing such a force, as to render us secure against external threats and attacks. This force, from circumstances arising from the peculiarity of our situation, cannot be regular; it must not be composed of men whose services are voluntary; it must be a force, embracing a great part of those capable of bearing arms, supported by law, and subject to the military code while in the field. A large force is indispensable, in order that we may be enabled to draw to one point, as great a number of men as possible in the least possible time. We do not know on which side we may be attacked; it is, therefore, necessary that we should be well defended on all sides. If an invading enemy once obtains an advantage, it will be found difficult to deprive him of the benefits arising from it. The consternation it causes insures his future success. If we cannot oppose him at first with a force equally efficient with his own, we must supply this defect by the superiority of our numbers. The force I allude to, as one to be adopted, is a numerous militia. To consist of at least six hundred thousand men, to be constantly maintained both during peace and war. To be ballotted for annually, or every two years. Those who have served for one period, to be subject also to the ballot for the next; and all deficiencies to be supplied in the same manner This force should be mustered and exercised, at least once every two weeks during war, and once every month during peace. Half-pay officers, and military men, incapacitated from engaging in actual service, would easily be induced to undertake the discipline of it for a small compensation. While in the field the strictest order ought to be observed, and all offences punished without respect to persons. Military exercises should also form a part of the education of our youth at all public schools. It is unnecessary to enter further into detail, as it would be only repeating what has already been adopted with regard to similar measures. Many arguments arising from our situation, I am aware may be offered against a plan such as I have above hinted at. But, all will readily acknowledge, that security ought to be the first object of a nation, as it

is the first principle of the social union. What signifies our laws, liberties, and a constitution the envy of the world, if we cannot preserve them? It will be said, that such a force could not be very efficient. It must be admitted, that it would not be equal to a regular force; it would, however, be better than a volunteer one. But, are we to have no military force at all, because we cannot have one so perfect as we would wish? I am convinced, that were some such plan to be adopted, and to become as permanently established and observed, as any other part of our constitution, that the happiest effects would result from it, both to our security and prosperity. In the ancient republics, a citizen was also a soldier, when the necessities of the state required his services; and although, I will allow, that there is a great difference, betwixt their situations and those of the nations of modern times; yet, it is not so great as to render what was practised by the former, incompatible with the circumstances of the latter. We all know what commotion it made in the country, when France after the breaking out of the present war, threatened us with invasion. All who witnessed the effects of that threat, must be astonished that no step has yet been taken to render us permanently secure.——R. M.——*Oct. 7*, 1807.

DOMESTIC OFFICIAL PAPER.

RIGHT OF SEARCH.—*By the King, a Proclamation, for recalling and prohibiting seamen from serving foreign princes and states.*

GEORGE R.——Whereas it hath been represented unto us, that great numbers of mariners and seafaring men, our natural-born subjects, have been enticed to enter into the service of foreign States, and are now actually serving as well on board the ships of war belonging to the said Foreign States, as on board the merchant vessels belonging to their subjects, notwithstanding our former Proclamation, recalling them, contrary to the duty and allegiance which our said subjects owe unto us, and to the great disservice of their native country; we have, therefore, thought it necessary at the present moment, when our kingdom is menaced and endangered, and when the maritime rights, on which its power and greatness do mainly depend, are disputed and called in question, to publish, by and with the advice of our Privy Council, this our Royal Proclamation:—We do hereby strictly charge and command all masters of ships, pilots, mariners, shipwrights, and other seafaring men, being our natural-born subjects, who may have been enticed into the pay or service of any foreign State, or do serve in any foreign ship or vessel, that, forthwith they and every of them do (according to their bounden duty and allegiance, and in consideration that their native country hath need of all their services), withdraw themselves, and depart from and quit such foreign services, and do return home to their native country; or do enter on board such of our ships of war as they may chance to fall in with, either on the high seas, or in any rivers, waters, havens, roads, ports, or places whatsoever or wheresoever.—And, for the better execution of the purposes of this our Royal Proclamation, we do authorize and command all Captains, Masters, and others, commanding our ships and vessels of war, to stop and make stay of all and every such person or persons (being our natural born subjects), as shall endeavour to transport or enter themselves into the service of any Foreign State, contrary to the intent and command of our Royal Proclamation, and to seize upon, take and bring away, all such persons as aforesaid, who shall be found to be employed or serving in any foreign merchant ship or vessel as aforesaid: but we do strictly enjoin all such our Captains, Masters, and others, that they do permit no man to go on board such ships and vessels belonging to States at amity with us, for the purpose of so seizing upon, taking, and bringing away such persons as aforesaid, for whose discreet and orderly demeanour the said Captains cannot answer, and that they do take special care that no unnecesary violence be done or offered to the vessel, or to the remainder of the crew, from out of which such persons shall be taken:—And in case of their receiving information of any such person or persons being employed, or serving on board of any ship of war belonging to such Foreign State, being a State at amity with us, we do authorize and command our Captains, Masters and others commanding our ships of war, to require of the Captain or Commander of such foreign ship of war, that he do forthwith release and discharge such person or persons, being our natural-born subject or subjects; and if such release and discharge shall be refused, then to transmit information of such refusal to the Commander in Chief of the squadron under whose orders such Captain or Commander shall be then serving, which information the said Commander in Chief is hereby strictly directed and enjoined to transmit, with the least possible delay, to our Minister residing at the seat of Government of that State to which the said foreign ships of war shall belong, to our Lord High

Admiral, or Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty for the time being, in order that we, being apprized of such proceeding, may forthwith direct the necessary steps to be taken for obtaining redress from the Government to which such foreign ship of war shall belong, for the injury done to us by the unwarranted detention of our natural-born subjects in the service of a foreign State :—And whereas it has further been represented unto us, that divers mariners and seafaring men, our natural born subjects, have been induced to accept letters of naturalization, or certificates of citizenship, from foreign states, and have been taught to believe that, by such letters or certificates, they are discharged from that duty of allegiance which, as our natural-born subjects, they owe to us; now we do hereby warn all such mariners, seafaring men, and others, our natural-born subjects, that no such letters of naturalization, or certificates of citizenship, do, or can, in any manner, divest our natural-born subjects of the allegiance, or in any degree alter the duty which they owe to us, their lawful Sovereign. But, in consideration of the error into which such mariners and seafaring men as aforesaid may have been led, we do hereby publish and declare our free pardon to all such our subjects, who, repenting of the delusion under which they have acted, shall immediately, upon knowledge of this our Royal Proclamation, withdraw themselves from foreign services, and return to their allegiance to us; and we do declare that all such our subjects, who shall continue in the service of the foreign states, in disregard and contempt of this our Royal Proclamation, will not only incur our just displeasure, but are liable to be proceeded against for such contempt, and shall be proceeded against accordingly; and we do hereby declare, that if any such masters of ships, pilots, mariners, seamen, shipwrights, or other seafaring men, being our natural-born subjects, shall be taken in any foreign service by the Algerines, or other Barbary powers, and carried into slavery, they shall not be reclaimed by us as subjects of Great Britain.—And we do further notify, that all such our subjects as aforesaid, who have voluntarily entered, or shall enter, or voluntarily continue to serve on board of any ships of war belonging to any foreign State at enmity with us, are, and will be guilty of high treason; and we do by this our Royal Proclamation declare, that they shall be punished with the utmost severity of the law.—Given at our Court at the Queen's Palace, the 16th day of October, 1807, and in the 47th year of our reign.—GOD SAVE THE KING.

COBBETT'S

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